TINA DARRAGH

Striking Resemblance

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1989

mother tongue see
pedestal — at the foot of "to place"
special use of "mother" — dregs, swamp
deserted — away from a line
a series

sphere of the father — sign of the future task
"task" — transposition of "tax"
translate see "transfer" — to bear, to carry across
solicitor — whole, entire + put into motion

vernacular — slave born in the master's house

fund as a noun the bottom
a flat piece of land
make a debt permanent

Raymond Chandler's sentence
"I had to learn American
just like a foreign language"
has had me at loose ends
for over a year
keeping track
of all my associations
with Chandler in particular
& mysteries in general
but as I keep looking
up at his sentence
I continue to wonder
why I've hung myself up
on someone else's feeling
of being out of place
with our native tongue

so I twist myself around
and link up with a memory

BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

on the corner to off the corner, Sun & Moon, 1981

my hands to myself, Dry Imager, 1975

Pi in the Skye, Anne Ferguson and Steve Franzino, 1980

STRIKING RESEMBLANCE

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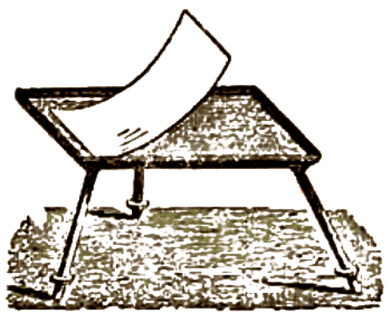
TINA DARRAGH

Striking Resemblance

WORK
1980-1986



BURNING DECK
Providence

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name weigh day

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Pi in the Skye

"Long-haired preachers come out ev'ry night,
Try to tell you what's wrong & what's right
But when asked how 'bout something to eat
They will answer with voices so sweet:

You will eat, bye & bye
In that glorious land above the sky:
Work & pray, live on hay,
You'll get pie in the sky when you die."

Joe Hill

"Union cards often were called 'pie cards' because friendly storekeepers & restaurant owners would allow credit to card-holders. 'Pie card artist' was a derogatory term for a union organizer, especially one who promised 'pie in the sky' to union members."

Morris Dictionary of Word & Phrase Origins

) *PART 1* (

pi + skye—cliché as sound
in listening
there are certain sounds
each seems to repeat
over & over

I'm reminded of Allen Fisher
thinking of PLACE
one aspect
the underground rivers of London
& how
outbreaks of influenza
when charted on a map
flowed along those lines

lines of construction—factories, highways, homes
atop
lines of once freely flowing rivers

which "surface"
one way or another

and it sounds as if these levels might apply to people

lines of construction—phrases, sentences, paragraphs,
atop
lines of once freely flowing sounds
in listening
each person has certain sounds
that repeat
that "surface"
as parts of words preferred

these are an individual's "cliche sounds"
using "cliche"
in the industrial revolutionary
origin of the word
as a sound

the sound of a machine
molding material (raw, or)
on a production
line evoking a sound
over & over
suction created
by the machine moving
up & down on the conveyor belt

the breath of the line
—so—
cliche as a construction
has come to mean expressions — overused, misused
—but—
cliche as a sound

is the inner life of a person's voice
that surfaces
one way or another
in our industrial age

in thinking
about cliche as sound
a question
whether these sound lines
can be traced
to a particular geographic location
that PLACE
being "home" for a person's voice

sound as the shared element
of geography and the subconscious
what procedure
could be used to find this PLACE?

taking a clue from science
surveyors find the depth of various points
by taking soundings

It occurred to me that P.'s work
as lines
of sounds, fragments
that rise up in him
"on line" at work
there scribbled on slips of paper
& later strung together

these fragments
would place his cliche sounds
where soft vowels
appear with hard consonant blends

I suppose that the Isle of Skye
might be such a place

fragment of P.'s work — "Number One Son"

spodes dull glam) slud dry)
jclaw) plab)gansett) klinge)
lunmthened) tea wote (on ounced)
cule drard) air culled omimm)

tren harp) lapted deb)rubber length) hicting person)
caggen) fringe)jasm) dreeth)till bleed)
ql qliff) magged farm) speoan,) ojibe)

step one: dictionary transcription — I begin by taking the sounds within the word "Skye" itself and list what other sounds fall along with them.

"sk" takes "ye"

1 agen
1 ager rak
1 ag way
1 ald
1 an e at lis
1 ara Brae
1 at
6 ate(s)
1 at ole
1 a to ma
1 a tos co py
1 ean
1 eadadle
1 eech
2 eet(s)
1 eigh
6 el e ton(s)
1 ellum
2 elp(s)
2 ene(s)
1 low bell
1 low brick
1 low cedar
1 low copper
1 low foxglove
1 low gentian
1 low granadilla
1 low light
1 low locust
1 low loose-strife
1 low melilot
1 low mombin
1 low perilla
1 low pikeperch
1 low puccoon
1 low river
1 low stone
1 low stone crop
1 low stone falls
1 low streak

step two: Skye glossary list

abhainn	barnacle	dunscaith
firkin	ord	corrie
garboard	wrack	tube
strakes	shelduck	cnoc
bobbins	gruagach	tupping
allt	shoal	gorse
ob	lythe	bush
Isay	dugongs	cleg
sisal	bothy	gannets
griape	river	crotal
stern	pith	braces
fairleads	bracken	creel
ludag	muirburn	corncrake
plunk	skart	kestrel

step three: In taking 70 examples from *A Linguistic Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland,* including liquids, dentals, sibilants, nasals, spirants, diphtongs and occlusives found on Skye, I found that P.'s work contained but one example of sounds found there.

) PART 2 (

Long Arms—sounds as clichés

"Stretch out your arm & I'll stretch out mine. Let's measure them. No one has as long an arm as I have. SEE! I have really long arms!"

Long Arms

moola

"mool" started as a variation of "gool" (gold) indicating farmland freshly plowed and ready to be worked. This aspect of "ready" lead to a second meaning — dry bread broken into a bowl as a sop for the liquid there. Mingling of solid and liquid lead to a third definition — to associate intimately. Adding "a" to "mool" switches us over to religion where it is a corruption of "mullah" — a Moslem learned in theology.

razz-ma-tazz

"razz" was first "razzia", an Algerian expression for a quick-as-a-flash military raid. When later added to "dazzle" as a description of a football play, it took on the properties of electricity, as in "I'm going to razzle-dazzle the boys with my great lightning change act" or "There isn't enough real down-right razzle-dazzle here to run a milk cart." During vaude-ville, the dazzle was altered to "tazz" to accent the "z" in "razz", the same buzz made by the footlights used to brighten the stage.

sis boom ba

sis

co wet
era
kin
ley
mondi
iten
y
ter
tine
troid
trum
yphus

boom

The first "boom" heard was the coastline cry of the bittern. A similar "boom" is that made by waves hittng wood, as in the floating timber used to partition part of a harbor or the spar run out to extend the foot of a sail or the pole used to push a boat off from land.

ba

A lower case "b" used with a "," can stand for bar, barn or black. A capital "B" used with a "." and a "," stands for bass or basso or bay or Bible or bolivar or boliviano or book or born or breadth or British or brother. A lower case "b" with a "." stands for baseball or bay or "blend of" or born. Capital "B" with a dash stands for Boeing. Lower case "b" with a lower case "a" can mean human-headed bird or the second letter of the Arabic alphabet. A capital "B" with a lower case "a" denotes "barium." A capital "B" with a "." and a capital "A" with a "." can mean Bachelor of Arts, bastard amber or British America. Another "a" added to "ba" gives us "bleat" and a double "ba" leaves us with a molded rum raisin cake literally taken from the expression "old woman."

) *PART 3* (

cliché as place—rainbows

The step by step process of looking
to rainbows
as a PLACE
for "Pi in the Skye"
started awhile ago
when reading *Eye & Brain* —
the author tells the story
of Sir Isaac Newton
pretending to see
orange and indigo
in the first color spectrum he made
so he could list seven colors
— a lucky number —
and this made me feel very fond of science
given that I myself stretch things a lot
to make them fit

so I started to wonder
about my other associations with "rainbow"
— for example, the Rainbow Tribe —
Josephine Baker being one of my idols
for adopting a baby of every color
but in reading her autobiography
I discovered some facts I hadn't known
she'd stretched things beyond her limits
originally deciding with her husband on four babies
compulsively she'd bring home more
adding up to 12 — the number of the tribes of Israel
and this numerical coincidence
calmed her down a bit
but by then all the money
she made was never enough
& she and her husband separated
& eventually she lost her place
& had to move her tribe to a tiny Paris apt.
from which she attempted a come-back

I still admire her greatly
but this new information didn't fit
my image of her as the perfect
international mother

At this point I was reminded of Jean Toomer
having read his book *Cane*
I'd assigned him a role
as my "literary" patron saint
to go along with St. Martin de Porres
for whom I was named
both mulattoes
who felt they had all the colors
of the world's races in their blood

& *Cane*
written by Toomer going

from the country (GA)
to the city (DC)
as I had come from the country (PA)
to the city (DC)
reading his book in this city
— DC —
where many scenes take place
people of mixed heritage
feeling at home
as if all their colors combine
to make the omnipresent white
of the government buildings

But Toomer left the line
between GA & DC
& never wrote a book like *Cane* again
instead he turned to promulgating religion
through over-long works
in which he tries to tie
everything together

the only link with his past
being the repeated sound
of Margery/Marjorie
the name of both his wives
a form of "Margaret"
meaning "pearl"

& this brought me back
to my original question
about sounds and geography
& I wondered about sounds
and the rainbow
& looking it up in the *Rainbow Book*
I found that, yes, the physicist
Hermann von Helmholtz

had once "amused himself"
by comparing the colors of the rainbow
with the notes of the diatonic scale

visible light occupying
approximately one octave
in the electromagnetic spectrum

but the editor uses the word "approximately"
to indicate Helmholtz may have been stretching things
a bit because people have used rainbows
for whatever they've wanted them to be —
the Hebrews saw rainbows as evidence of God's favor
while the Greeks knew them to be harbingers of war &
turbulence
& the Zulus thought they were serpents who'd suck up
children and cattle

which turned me to the rainbow itself
one of many "atmospheric optical phenomena"
like the halo of 22 degrees, sundog, corona, etc.

all the result of water or ice falling through the sky
at random
illuminated from behind
by strong white light

& what I hadn't understood before
is that a rainbow exists
more as a direction than as a location —
that I must be standing at a certain angle
— the anti-solar point —
in order to see it
& that conditions exist for seeing some sort of rainbow
24 hours a day — for example
last week we picked up a roll of developed film
with pictures of P. & D. building blocks

& in one shot
there is a small arc of light
to the right of their building
& I'm not sure exactly
what to call it
or how it happened
but I do feel extremely lucky
to have been looking there
from the right angle
to that place
at that time

)))) 2 (

Raymond Chandler's Sentence

for Susan Howe
& her The Liberties

Earl Stanley Gardner was one of the mystery writers Raymond Chandler imitated when first he wrote fiction. Chandler would select a Gardner story, rewrite it, compare it with the original and rework it once more. Chandler attributes this practice to his classical training at Dulwich where he would translate Cicero into English then back to Latin again. "I had to learn American just like a foreign language," is the way he himself put it.

But Chandler had spent the first seven years of his life in America, speaking American: a combination of "railroad" American (his father was an engineer for the Union-Pacific) and "respectable old party" American (his mother was Anglo-Irish, daugther of a Waterford solicitor). When his father was away on business, he would hear "small town" American spoken at the home of his aunt and uncle in Flattsmouth, Nebraska. Then there would be the "frontier" American spoken in the transient hotels where Raymond and his mother would meet Mr. Chandler on the road. It was in one of these hotels that Raymond heard the edgy sort of American spoken by his father as he decided never to see them again. Soon thereafter Raymond and his mother sailed to England, where he heard English spoken for the next 16 years.

mother tongue SEE

pedestal — at the foot of "to place"

special use of "mother" — dregs, swamp

deserted = away from a line
a series

sphere of the father — sign of the future task

"task" — transposition of "tax"

translate SEE "transfer" — to bear, to carry across

solicitor — whole, entire + put into motion

vernacular = slave born in the master's house

fund	as a noun	the bottom a flat piece of land
	as a verb	to make a debt permanent
school		employment of leisure
civil		pertaining to the citizen as distinct from the soldier
math		obsolete use — to mow general use — to learn
country		that which lies opposite one's view
prostitute		to cause to stand, to set up, to place

Raymond Chandler's sentence
"I had to learn American
just like a foreign language"
has had me at loose ends
for over a year
keeping track
of all my associations
with Chandler in particular
& mysteries in general
but as I keep looking
up at his sentence
I continue to wonder
why I've hung myself up
on someone else's feeling
of being out of place
with our native tongue

so I twist myself around
and link up with a memory
of my mother chain reading
mysteries while lying on the couch
her afternoon "nap" always
our way of finding her
when we'd come home from school
& P. remembering this to be true
for his mother, too
only she would doze sitting up
a paperback face down on her lap
& I wasn't able to know his mother
having met P. after she died
but I think of her
along with my own
when I lie down with a mystery
to read about someone
who knows what to do
when something goes wrong

then one evening *The Big Sleep* is on T.V.
— the remake with Robert Mitchum —
& snatches of Chandler's prose scattered throughout
in which C. has the detective talk to himself
about a father who is owed
the right to remain ignorant
of the bad blood in his line —
the underlying reason
why this hardboiled Marlowe
does what he does for no money

which I hadn't expected
because I'd always thought of Marlowe
as outside the story line
of pay up to protect your reputation which
if broken "as an expression"
into its component parts
comes out as to cover (up front) thinking

& that further confuses me
since in reading C.'s work
I'm left with the feeling
that I'm facing something
I can't see

so I cut back to C.'s practice
of learning how to put together a sentence
by taking Latin ones apart
& I recall the various clues
my h.s. classics teacher would give

first — look for the verb
& if the rest of the sentence doesn't fall
into the usual subject/object sequence
the elusive construction
is probably a form of the ablative
something we don't have in our language
— a place case —

place of means or
place of instrument or
place of agent or
place of separation or
perhaps the ablative absolute —
a past participle used to express the future

at which point I cross back over to C.'s bio
& trying to give the investigation some order
line up information from his life
with my h.s. brand Latin
as in

absence of the father — look for the verb
dependence of the mother — the past participle used
to express the future
humiliation of a class system — place of separation
marriage to an older woman — place of agent
vice-presidential duties at Dabney Oil — place of instrument
drunken binges ending in dismissal — place of means

but in rereading these concocted equations
I realize I needed to create this order
so I could see myself use
the hardboiled genre
to go to my father
perhaps as Chandler did
to go to his
though I need prove it
only to myself

so I'm left with a list
of my favorite Chandler sentences
ones I'd pulled from his texts
to create a final segment
when I'd felt a need
to put things together

but one seems to fall out
by itself
as a kind of summation

In "Bay City Blues"
the detective is caught in a frame
& tries to escape by climbing
into the next room and dressing
in someone else's clothes,
even affecting another's voice
but C. has the tough cop spot
him anyway & say
"Get dressed, sweetheart & don't fuss with your necktie.
Places want us to go to them."

so it's there that I decide to abandon
the project & leave Chandler's sentences
with him & as a parting shot
look up "abandon"
as a way to set off
& following it back far enough
I find it comes from
"to place" under "speak"
just where I've wanted to be
all along

Scale Sliding

for Joan Retallack
& her own slide rule

)(

each had a room
the little by each roomed away from the rest, own to each
in every room sunk: water wash paste strays
no matter, the fullness of a corner — it was clean
of this course a one was not
not own, not clean, not sunk from the fullness of corners
not roomed none of this mattered to each own away,
the rest so slow the one made one of the rest
went from own to own and took something from each
opened a window and threw all to the ground

3/73

Spring '84

going through things
I came across
some old poems
& I was struck
by how many "corners"
I'd stuck there —

rough corners
cut corners
four corners
turn corners
corner accessories
corner beads
corner chisels
corner men
corner stones
corner tables

corner-wise
all the corners
but "corner" itself:
the meeting place
of two surfaces and/
or the space created
there — a double edge
I'd never stopped
to understand
with my desire
to hold things
in my hands

so I wonder how two lines
could be a corner
without crossing them over
to the "own" element in "known"

— or —

how can I keep a corner moving
so I can see
my eyes converge the surfaces
into depth <-----> me

As a child I was a late reader, something no one could understand since I could talk up a storm. Now, I'm a slow reader. When tired I transpose letters and numbers. Some refer to this as mild dyslexia. Those with true dyslexia find this explanation hard to take. I was diagnosed as having eyes which don't work together — "wide divergence at near and far." Eye exercises produced no visible difference.

I became convinced that I was a physiological distorter & that I had to find a way to set myself straight.

so I wonder if
seeing double
goes with
double talk

— the pun —

my favorite way
to think of words

sounds used so they can move
more than one way

& it seems that this "corner"
coming up over & over
lets me know
that as puns go
I'm not playing fair

piecing my words together
with a point
much as I adjust
the fragments I see

a tightening needed
to focus on what's near
which serves to keep
my words away

I'd like to break that habit

so I turn to find something
inside "pun"
that will point a way
for me to go
& looking up its definition
I find a special technical one —
"to pound down
as in making a road"

Some distortions are simply found. From a second floor balcony, a neighboring building appears to have walls that curve away from the corner. But aside from going from balcony to balcony, there's no way to tell whether it's you or the building that's a bit off. Some have gotten around this problem by building models — ambiguous figures — which purposely distort lines so we can view "what we do" to see.

It occurs to me that I've been making the pun do much the same with words, though I don't know what it is that I want to make obvious.

So I start off by breaking down "corner" into its various parts & constructing sample ambiguous figures with the words that surround them.

projecting angle ("horn" graphed as a Necker cube, where a marked face appears sometimes to the front, other times to the back)

face front round dance back face tortoise corns

face front spike bowspirit back face sembling flint

face front mark length back face varying cross

face front leaves & small back face oven-shaped mound

face front out a horizon back face glacial cinques

face front mitted by such back face out of (the) work

face front guard pin back face bearant part

hollow angle (elements of "fragment" and "frame" charted as a Ponzo/railroad track illusion)

a part broken off	looks longer than	open border or case
plain wooden member	looks longer than	a rigid structure
scrap collapse or break	looks longer than	shell side of a hull
ment (um) a broken piece	looks longer than	verse, riblike members
expressed as a/b	looks longer than	all the scanning lines
coping conceals the slope	looks longer than	between web frames
work and deep cuts	looks longer than	fox grapes

meeting place (fragments of "meeting" and "place" alternating as object and ground)

"They moved to another locality."
seen as "wood of trees" given to "stand"

"Not much interest is taken in the contest."
seen as "to be between" given to "testify"

"They're filming most of the action."
seen as "membrane" given to "do"

"We bought the whole company."
seen as "bread" given to "obtain by chasing"

"Can you lodge us for the night?"
seen as "leaf" given to "ink"

"A coyote laughed in the night."
seen as "straight side" given to "wash"

"He allowed his children a fair amount of latitude."
seen as "broad" given to "a cutting off"

elliptical uses	(constructed model of "corner," a triangular tool)	
set apart	reverses to	gear akin to TAKE
special use of TAG	reverses to	collection + agent suffix
tail + er	reverses to	taint + less
title, proper to monks	reverses to	TALC = TALK
rope-end	reverses to	TALLY + MAN
borer akin to hole	reserses to	special use of TONE
a stretching	reverses to	to wipe + twist of straw

so I hold up the corners
that I've taken apart
expecting to see
what I've been making
"corner" stand for

instead I find
that in doubling "corner" up
I have two different surfaces
but still no space
since I've come to them
with the same back & forth action
that leaves me
one-on-one
away from my words

which I can't see move
because I assume
I'm with them
in the same room

Then I came across a description of the Ames Distorted Room, in which A. Ames (painter/psychologist) uses two straight lines & a sloping line to create a room with a "false" corner. Other lines are used in the design to give one an image of a normal room. If a viewer stations herself at a fixed point just outside, two strangers of equal height standing at the far end look different in size. But if the viewer knows the person standing in the "false" corner, she wonders what's wrong with the Room.

I decide to put some puns in an Ames Room (by transcribing their dictionary location in that form), making sure that I leave an opening for the viewing point.

rent seck

lace
to a dry

eping.
ngage in dry far
p) by means of dry

arming practiced in
fall, depending lar
the soil more recep
— dry farmer
cial fly designated f
f. wet fly.
aze due principally
the air.

Ceram. removal of
a piece (dry foot

urrence of freezing
ion of hoarfrost.

walled plain in the
on in the libration

nd related merchan-
ries, hardware, etc
Informal. to ambush
y mauling: The rid
to betray by a sud-
The party dry-g

ds,
D.S.
d.s.
DCS

D.Sc.
D.S.C.
D.S.M.
Sur
D.S.O.

D.S.S., Do

DST, dayligh

D-state, (de
electron in
mentum of t
from such s
ol: D.

viewing
point

volcanic tuff

ur
mit
mals, re
tan of an
la rae mi a
called deer f
ley first foun
mic, *adj.*

la ro sa (too, la
(1960).

(too le; Sp. too le
f two large bulrushes
lifornicus, found in C
dated lands and marshes.

le ar (Fr. ty la ar), n. a
50 (1960).

le perch. See under perch[2]

l, ya), n. a town in North Ame

ip (too lip, tyoo —), n. any lil
Tulipa, cultivated in many varie
showy, usually erect, cup-shaped
wers of various colors. 2. a bu
(earlier tulipa > NL apar. back
It. *tulipano* (taken as adj.)
a fancied RBAN

viewing
point

ludicrous stick

to
clean
over: T
formal.
whip. b.
or surpass
completion or
etc.: They need
into shape. 6. 1
19) 7. lick the d
stroke of the tongue
be taken up by one str
cream cone. 10. See salt
b. a brief, brisk burst of ac
pace or clip; speed. 12. Jazz.
in swing music. 13. lick and a
perfunctory manner of doing some
time to clean thoroughly, but gave
promise. (ME lick (e), OE liccian; c.
akin to Goth (bi) laigon, L lingere, Gk
(up) — licker, n.

Lick (lik), n. a ring formation in the fi
the face of the moon: about 21 miles in
lick er-in (lik er in), n. a roller on
chine, esp. the roller that opens the st
the card and transfers the fibers to the
Also called taken-in. (n. use of v. phr
licking (lik ing), n. 1. Informal. a. a
thrashing. b. a reversal or disappointm
2. the act of one who or that which lick
licorice (lik e ish, lik rish).

viewing
point

so I'd cornered my puns
as I had in the past
as a way to keep words
from going wrong
— ie: away from me —
in a place
where I have no hold
over scattered sounds
that miss their mark
& fearing their fall
make myself
the scattered one

but by breaking the lines
I realize
I'm not the one
who causes words
to lie apart
— they come that way —
for example
the other day
we'd had a typical Washington snow
topped off by rain
giving what remained
enough crust
for finger writing
& when I went out to our car
I found what was left
of a message on the hood —
part of a letter followed by an "o"
backed up by more partials + a "t" and a "s"
& my first thought was
"someone has written
'go to hell, fatso'
on my car"
but in looking again

the phrase fell out as
"hold fast to dreams"
the kind of trade-off
I'd rather bet on
given this feeling
that all the practice
in turning things around
has let the words go
& in that scatter
I know that I'm no
different

)))))4(

"...a perfect one of THOSE..."

name weigh day

for the Doctors Foye,
Ed & Barbara

) *PART I* (

"... a perfect one of THOSE ..."

the times I'm out
looking for a job
I need to reread
James M. Cain's Depression story
Mildred Pierce

fold back the book
and give myself
a "grass widow" look

so I can open the door
& imagine what to do
as, like Mildred, I weigh
job interviews in light
of the possible risk
to resoling my shoes

grass widow

1853 "The absence of so many of the 'lords of creation' in pursuit of what they value more than all the women in the world — nuggets . . . the wives thus left in town to deplore their husbands' infatuation are termed grass-widows — a mining expression . . ."

E. Clacey,
A Lady's Visit to Gold Diggings in Australia

1865 "The pretty grass widow is going because everyone else is gone."

Englishman Magazine

1892 "She and her husband lived charmingly — apart, 'grass-widowing' here and there."

Critic

1926 "She could never resolve the problem of whether she would have been happier or unhappier in a grass-widowed state."

W. J. Locke,
Stories Near & Far

1930 "We're celebrating his grass-widowerhood."

Harwood & Browne, *Cynara*

1936 No reference that I could find.

H.L. Mencken, *The American Language*

1938 "The great American Institution that never gets mentioned on the Fourth of July [is] a grass widow with two small children to support."

Roy Hoopes, *Cain*, p. 305

along that line
neither Mildred nor I
strictly qualify
as "grass widows"

deserted
abandoned
"at grass"

she having told her husband Bert to leave
& me trying to split work down the middle w/P

& I wonder how
this taking stock in myself
consists of jumping track
instead of keeping intact

why I try to make up
for any short fall
by picturing myself
a set-back
of another's absence

set-back

". . . of the same pungent sort — claw hammer (coat, 1869), mule-skinner and jack rabbit (1870), tangle-foot (whiskey, 1871), cuss-word (Mark Twain, 1872), hoodlum (1872), dead-beat (Petroleum V. Nasby, 1872), jam and jig-saw (1873), sand (courage, Bret Harte, 1875), grub-stake and hold-up (both 1875), freeze-out and slate (political, 1877), heeler (c. 1877), stalwart (political) and crook (1878), set-back, joint (a low den) and spellbinder (c. 1880). To . . ."

H.L. Mencken, *The American Language*, 1936, p. 167

when Mildred returned home
from her first day as a waitress
she was all done in

Cain has her neighbor, Mrs. Gessler
come over for tea & refer to the fact
that Mildred has no choices

at which point Mildred utters
an "I'll _____ !"

29 lines later
Cain has her give a value
to this blank
by naming it "pride"
something her daughter Veda has
& something Mildred then can use
to finesse Bert out of his car
her first step
toward saving her shoes

29 lines from ____ to "pride"

from *A Dictionary of the Underworld*

paper makers get the tats
post our neddies
lug-rest
Sinks of London Laid Open
powder-monkey
powder up
powder wagon
powdering a nok
The Amorous Gallant's Tongue
Prads peck
swell flashes a rum prad
cut Bags from behind Horses
Foyst, Nip, Lift, Praggis
prance (at snaffler)
prancer's nab (or poll)
"prap" as misprint for "trap"
humming a cove
O per se O
Glymmar in the Prat
(fire in the touch-bore)
Martin Mark-All
prat whids Romely
pratt fisk
a ken where one may set one's pratt
blue-pigeon flyer
press the bricks
prick for panam in the wicker
prick (in) the belt
pricking in the wicker for a dolphin
pride & joy. a boy: Pacific Coast: c. 20
Convict '34. M & B '44. Rhyming

Mildred Pierce was a troublesome project
for Cain because he wrote it in the pretentious
(a.k.a. "straight") third person
instead of his usual — a first person dialect
of someone he'd pretend to be

echo
weigh to GO
two words unknown
"alone" and "another"
two words together

Reading *Mildred Pierce* is a puzzle
for me as the lack of dialect
allows "pride" to surface
as slang for what I pretend to be

echo
if GO is from no weigh
one is blank
to restart weigh
next blank must equal one

Writing with *Mildred Pierce* becomes a chance
for me to combine two lines of time
with rhyme in slang —
my need for names to see

) PART 2 (

name weigh day

(the form for my rhyming slangs is taken from the *Dictionary of Rhyming Slang)*

where mothering is valueless
though children are rare
a child becomes the product
of the mother's need to prepare

sheen of hunch	crunch
spat who "hey"	quay
minority planet	ram it
out rail beyond	dawn

table manners
mind the result
of passing "dignity"
along with the salt

fin & fog — Infant of Prague
hound & still — window sill
cheek & lake — earthquake
"huh" & cuff — enough

as a mother speaks
she creates a list
plus the feeling
it already exists

face lap — cap
mole pole — soul
street socket — pocket
rag fence — evidence
tree twitch — ditch
cranny melt — knelt
sponge shed — dread
biscuit rust — dust
gopher raft — laugh
breeze squeeze — knees
shark wax — relax
toe rug — slug
sweat tack — fact
sky strike — kite

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name weigh day

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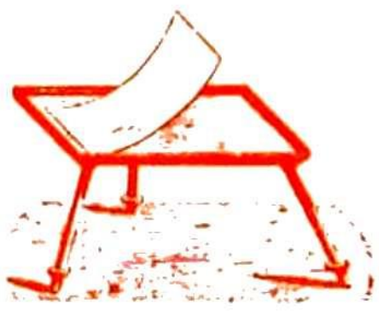

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